



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Daniel 9:1-27

Daniel

"The Numbers Don't Lie"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are continuing our studies in the Book of Daniel. We come to a very important chapter, chapter 9. And we'll look at all 27 verses, but I won't read all 27. I'm going to begin with the first three verses, take a look at Jeremiah for a moment, and then conclude with verses 24 through 27.

But the chapter begins: "In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans – in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years."

And in our Bible that is Jeremiah 25. I'm going to read what Daniel read, which is verses 11 and 12 of Jeremiah 25. " 'The whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,' declares the Lord, 'for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation.' "

That's what Daniel was reading. And having read that, we read in verse 3 of Daniel 9: "So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes."

And in verses 4 through 19, he prays. And then he receives an answer to his prayer in verses 20 through 23. God sends his Angel Gabriel to him, and Gabriel explains what will happen in the future, what will be the future for Israel, Jerusalem, the Jewish people.

Verse 24: "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

May the Lord bless this reading of His Word. Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, it is a great privilege and blessing to come together with your people on a Sunday morning and read the Scriptures together and to consider the meaning of the text which gives us a revelation about the future. What was future today, what is past to us, but also what is future to us as well. And so, Lord, as we look at this great prophecy, this very significant passage in terms of prophetic literature, we pray that you would guide us in our thinking and encourage us, and make the right applications to us. Certainly, one of those is that your Word is invaluable, your Word is true, and you keep your promises. You have kept much of the prophecy that we've read.

You will keep what is to come. We can be assured of that just as Daniel was. And so, Lord, we pray that that would have a proper effect upon us, that you would encourage us and strengthen us, as you look back to what your Son has done and look forward to His coming again. And we can certainly rejoice in that. We live in evil times.

We live in a fallen world, and we've been reminded of that, painfully, this past week. And we want to remember those who are suffering greatly right now in the state of Connecticut. We pray that you would give comfort and bring solace to those grieving families. But it's a reminder to us that our hope is not in this world. This is a world that is under the penalty of sin, and we look for a day coming when righteousness will be established on the earth.

And we have that prophesied in our text. Encourage us with that and give us perspective in light of that. Bless us. We have a glorious future. We have a secure present because you are in control of all things.

You are in control of our lives and you will supply and meet our needs. And so in light of that, Lord, we pray for those who have particular difficulty at this time. Those who are sick, those who face medical procedures. We pray that you would give them encouragement and confidence in yourself and help them to rest in Christ. For those who are without work, we pray that you would provide for them and encourage them.

May this passage this morning be a great encouragement to all of us. We pray that the Spirit of God would open our minds and guide us in the understanding of it, and that all that we do would be to your honor and glory. Well, to that end, Lord, we pray that you'd prepare our hearts for our time of study and worship with the hymn that we'll sing and then the special music we will enjoy. We pray your blessings upon all of this. Bless our time of worship, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

[Message] A few years ago, I had a visit with a young Israeli who was working here for a software company. And we got into a

conversation about the Bible, and he wanted to know how I knew it was true. So I gave him my reasons which didn't impress him very much. He gave a kind of indifferent shrug and said, "I love math," which I took to mean the truth of math is self-evident and indisputable. And that's probably, for the most part, true.

It's hard to argue with the numbers when they add up. One plus one equals two. There's no debate about that, is there. Well, when they add up, we say, "The numbers don't lie." So he put his confidence in math.

Well, that makes Daniel chapter 9 really particularly fascinating, because it is a mathematical chapter in which the numbers add up perfectly. They predict the precise time in which Jesus would come and announce Himself to be the Messiah and predict His death with precision. Daniel chapter 9 has been called the key to prophetic interpretation and the backbone of prophecy. It's not only a profound chapter in terms of prophecy, but also a significant chapter for its prayer. The chapter opens with one of the greatest prayers in the Bible.

It begins with verse 4 and it ends with verse 19. It is a model prayer for both its form and its content. James wrote that "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much." And then James gives as his example of that righteous man who accomplished much with his prayer, as Elijah. Well, he could give Daniel equally as an example of a righteous man giving effective prayer.

That's the subject of our chapter, Daniel chapter 9. Really, two subjects in this chapter. Prayer and prophecy, and first prayer. Daniel begins with the date. In the previous chapter he had a vision of the rise of Alexander the Great and the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes.

It's now 12 years later, "in the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus." That was the year 538 BC, not long before Daniel would be thrown into the lion's den. So he is an old man at this point in his life. Daniel was in his study and he was reading the Book of

Jeremiah, when he came to the part of the scroll where Jeremiah prophesied Israel would go into captivity for 70 years. It's in Jeremiah 25; we read it, verses 11 and 12.

The numbers in it and the prophecy are specific. Because of Israel's sin, the people would be captives and the country would be laid waste. But at the end of the 70 years, God would punish the King of Babylon and make the land of Babylon desolate. Daniel could add. He was carried away in the first deportation of the people in the year 605 BC.

Nineteen years later, Jerusalem was destroyed in the year 586 BC. That meant that from the time that Daniel had been carried off to Babylon as a boy of perhaps the age of 13, 67 of the 70 years had been fulfilled. They'd been completed. The numbers don't lie. There were three years left of the captivity.

Now, Daniel's response to that is quite significant I think. He knows, as he reads the Word of God, there are three years left. God's Word is clear and God's decree is fixed and certain. What does Daniel do? Does he go out and spread the word. Well, he may have at some point.

But what he does here in our text is he prayed. He fasted, he put on sackcloth and ashes, and he prayed. Why? The numbers were fixed, the prophecy was set. God's Word cannot fail.

Why pray when something has been decreed and you have every reason to believe it's going to come to pass. Well, that's often the question that's asked of people who believe in the sovereignty of God. Why pray? Why pray if predestination is true? Why evangelize if the doctrine of unconditional election is true?

Well, both are true. They're clearly taught in the Word of God. Ephesians 1:11 gives but one example of the explicit text that states that. And I'm not even speaking of all the implicit texts. But Ephesians 1:11, Paul says, believers, the saved, have an eternal "inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will."

So why pray? It may puzzle you, but that's what Daniel did. That's what this prophet who believed in the prophecies of God and the certainty of those prophecies, the certainty of their fulfillment, that's what he did immediately. John Calvin was a man of prayer. In fact, lots of the pages of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* were devoted to the subject prayer.

But if we want a rationale explanation for prayer, and why we pray in light of the sovereignty of God, I think is simple. God, who ordained the end, ordained the means to the end. Prayer is the God-given means to an end. He commands it. That is reason, in and of itself, to pray.

"Pray without ceasing," we're told. That alone is reason to pray. But the rationale is the one who has ordained the end has said, "Pray to receive it." We obtain the blessings of God through prayer. That's the means by which we obtain those things which God has ordained.

He commands it and there's good reason to do it. And so, as a godly man who believed the promises of God, Daniel claimed them. He acted on them. He prayed that God's will would be done, and that is what we are to do as well. Prayer is well worth a lesson or more.

We're not going to give a great deal of time to it, because I want to spend most of our time on the end of the chapter in the prophecy. But this is a prayer that Calvin called "an example, guide, and a common form for all of us to study." This is a model prayer. This is something that we should study.

First, in verse 4, Daniel praises God as "great and awesome." He describes Him as faithful. He is the "God, who keeps his covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him." In other words, Daniel began praising God for who He is and expressing his absolute confidence in all that God has promised to do. He's resting in Him, he's trusting in Him.

He's expressing his faith and his knowledge that God is full of lovingkindness. That's the kind of God we serve. He delights in blessing us. That's how he approaches the Lord. And then, in verse 5,

verses 5 through 14, he confesses his sin and the sins of the nation. It's a recognition that the captivity they had been in was deserved.

Verse 5: We have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances. So he gives a soaring indictment against himself and the people, the nation as a whole. They have sinned. And the first word that he uses there in that statement to describe sin is very significant. It really defines for us the nature of sin, what sin does, what it is.

And that word that's used basically means to miss the mark. It's used, for example, of the warriors of the tribe of Benjamin, in Judges 20:16, "who could sling a stone at a hair and not miss." They were very accurate with their slings, and they could sling it at the target and not miss. And that word, "miss" is the word that's translated here, "sin," a common word in the Bible for sin.

What is sin? It's missing. It's missing the mark. It's missing the target. It is falling short of God's standard of righteousness with is the standard of perfection.

And the people did that routinely. Daniel unfolds their failures. They didn't listen to the prophets that God had sent to them. They didn't listen to the Word of God. They were covered with shame, he says in verse 7.

Everyone is guilty. From the king to the princes, to the fathers, to the people; guilty, covered with shame. So what had happened to the nation was not a surprise. The law of Moses had warned of the consequences of sin from the very beginning. As the people are about to go into the land, the last sermon that Moses gave the people.

He wouldn't be entering with them, but he gave them sermons that give would give them an indication of how they were to live, and what would happen if they were obedient and what would happen if they were disobedient. And in chapter 8 of the Book of Deuteronomy, there's a long list of the curses that would fall upon the nation for disobedience. And they're striking, they're sobering. Well, in verses 11 through 14, Daniel refers to that in his reference to the law of

Moses, and acknowledges that all this calamity has come upon us and it's come upon them justly, just as God had promised that it would.

Centuries before He'd given them warning, then He had been patient with the nation, generation after generation, after generation, until finally the patience had worn out and He had brought the just punishment upon the people. They are guilty. Daniel confesses that in verse 15. Confession is part of prayer. It is the first step to help, to gaining God's blessings, to gaining restoration with the Lord. And so he confesses that.

And that brings him to his petition, his request for help for deliverance. He asks God to turn away His wrath from the city, from Jerusalem. He didn't ask, he says in verse 18, "of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion." He knows the kind of God to whom he's praying. He's a God full of lovingkindness, full of grace and mercy.

And because of His compassion, he asks God to be merciful to them. He throws himself completely upon the mercy of God. He's very much like that tax collector in the temple in Luke chapter 18. He stands behind everyone and he is afraid even to lift up his eyes to heaven because his guilt is so great. And he stands there "beating his chest, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'"

All he can do is ask for God's mercy, not for any merited favor because he has none. And Daniel prayed the same way. He prayed with genuine humility. The prayer concludes with great emotion. Verse 19: "O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name."

It was a prayer of praise, it was a prayer of confession, it was a prayer of petition. The promise is there, and Daniel laid hold of the promise through prayer. That's what we're to do. This is how we're to pray. We're to praise God, we're to ask Him for His blessing which He promises to give.

James is right. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. And it did in the case of Daniel. God was quick to answer his earnest prayer, and He answered by sending the Angel Gabriel to him. Gabriel came in the form of a man, and he announced that he had come to give Daniel "insight and understanding."

It was an understanding of events about the Jews and Jerusalem, and yet events that would go beyond those of the 70 years of captivity. It is a prophecy about God's plan for Israel. Prophecy is given in verses 24 through 27. It's a prophecy that on the face of it is kind of cryptic. It's a prophecy given in numbers.

It's known as Daniel's Seventy Weeks. "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place." How do we understand it? The key to doing that is in understanding the meaning of the word weeks. It is a literal seven-day week that is referred to there. Almost certainly not.

That would make the prophecy meaningless since the context requires much more time than that. The word for week is, literally, "sevens." And from ancient time to the present, commentators have understood the meaning of weeks or seven to be weeks of years, not weeks of days. The New International Version translates the verse in that way. Seventy sevens are decreed for your people and your holy city."

So seven in this passage is a unit of years, a unit of seven years. That's the only interpretation that fits the context, and it fits the context precisely. So Gabriel was saying to Daniel that seventy units or seventy weeks of years, a period of 490 years have been ordained to fulfill God's plan for Israel and the Jews. Gabriel divided these 70 weeks, or 490 years, into three periods: seven weeks of years, which is 49 years, sixty-two weeks of years, which is 433 years, and thirdly, one week of years, which is seven years. In that time, according to

verse 24, six things will happen beginning with the return of the Jews from Babylon to the return of Christ at His second coming.

Gabriel says that transgression will be finished, sin will be ended, atonement for wickedness will be made, everlasting righteousness will be brought in. The vision and prophecy will be sealed up. In other words the prophecy will be fulfilled. That's five, and then six, the most holy place, the temple, will be anointed. The first of these, finishing the transgression, is ending the Babylonian captivity by completing the 70 years of punishment.

The next two, making atonement and ending sin is a reference to Christ and His sacrifice, the sacrifice for sinners, the atonement that he would make. The cross is the only place for that. That's what has been predicted here, prophesied here. The Lord's sacrifice at Calvary which is the only way that sin can ultimately be removed. That's the basis for the fifth and the sixth thing, an age of everlasting righteousness, the kingdom age and the consecration of a future temple.

History has never known an age of everlasting righteousness. That age is an age that corresponds with Christ's return and the establishment of His kingdom on earth. So the 70 weeks have begun, but they've not yet concluded. When they began and when they will conclude is given in the next verses. The moment this prophecy or this prophetic clock started ticking is given in verse 25.

It happened when a decree was issued "to restore and rebuild Jerusalem." And then Gabriel says that from the time this decree is given "until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks," which amounts to sixty-nine weeks. Now, since a week is a seven-year period, 69 weeks or 69 times 7, equals 483 years when -- what Gabriel was telling Daniel was, in 483 years from the time that this decree is given, the Messiah would appear to Israel. So the identification of this decree is crucial for knowing when the 70 weeks began and understanding the prophecy. So what is the decree that Gabriel speaks of here?

Well, there are various possibilities for it. King Cyrus issued a decree to rebuild the temple. That's recorded in 2 Chronicles 36:23. It's the last verse of the book. But it was not a decree to rebuild the city. And that's what the decree is about: rebuild Jerusalem "with plaza and moat."

That's rather specific. It's about the city and it's about details of the city, plaza and moat. Cyrus gave a decree about the temple. A decree was given by Artaxerxes I that's recorded in Ezra 7:12-26. It urged more Jewish exiles to return with Ezra, and it provided materials for restoring the temple.

It was given in the seventh year of his reign which was 457 BC. Adding 483 to that, we get the number, the date AD 27 or AD 27, which would be the date of the beginning of Jesus' ministry. So there are a number of commentators who believe that's the decree and that's the date that we are to see here. It's certainly possible. But again there's a problem, and the problem is that decree was not about rebuilding Jerusalem, it's about rebuilding the temple.

And the decree that Gabriel is referring to here is about rebuilding the city of Jerusalem. So there's another possibility. A second decree was given by Artaxerxes. It was issued 13 years later. It's recorded in Nehemiah 2:5.

This occurred in the 23rd year of his reign on March 14, 444 BC. This one deals directly with rebuilding Jerusalem. So we've seen that is the decree. But when we add up the numbers, they don't come out well. The year that they add up to is AD 39 or 40, which is well over the date of our Lord's death, burial and resurrection, some six or seven years beyond the Lord's ministry. And, of course, the numbers don't lie.

So what are we to do? How are we to understand this? Well, there is a solution for calculating the 69 weeks or the 483 years that many have found in what is called a prophetic year, which is a year of 360 days instead of 365 days in the year. One person who advocated that is the late Dr. Harold Hoehner, who was chairman of the New

Testament Department at Dallas Theological Seminary, and who wrote extensively on this subject. And he shows that there's some very good evidence for understanding this calculation of a prophetic year.

There's good evidence from both biblical and non-biblical sources. Ancient calendars from India, Persia and Babylon, to South America and China, consistently observe 30-day months, which total 360-day years. It's also used in the Bible. In Genesis chapter 7 and chapter 8, the beginning and the end of the flood is given at five months, or 150 days, which are 30-day months which is a 360-day calendar. Well, based on this Jewish calendar, he's shown that it is precisely 483 years from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem in the year 444 BC to Christ's triumphal entry to Jerusalem in AD 33.

That was the only time that Jesus officially presented Himself to the nation as its Messiah. The prophecy then works out to the very day, and that's a precise fulfillment. After that, Gabriel continues in verse 26. "The Messiah will be cut off and have nothing." That word, "cut off," is used of eliminating or destroying something. And here it refers to Christ's death and it refers to it quite effectively because He would be cut off.

He would be cut off in the crucifixion. He was deserted by His disciples, He was naked, with soldiers at the foot of the cross gambling for His clothes. He was cut off. The King died a pauper, having nothing, as the prophecy states. But in that way, He fulfilled the prophecy of verse 24 "to make atonement for iniquity."

Then Gabriel prophesies the destruction of the rebuilt Jerusalem and temple. "And the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary." And it says that that "end will come with a flood." And that happened nearly 40 years later, 40 years after the crucifixion, when the Romans under Titus crushed the Jewish revolt that had begun in AD 66. And in the year AD 70, they destroyed the city and burned the temple.

It was catastrophic. The nation was swept away, and the history of Israel became the story of the wandering Jew. That concludes the

69 weeks of Gabriel's prophecy. But there are 70 weeks in it, and the 70th week of the years, or the last seven years of the prophecy, is given in the last verse, verse 27. As we read it, though, it's clear that the 70th week is still future.

These others have happened. We can see them in history. We can see, specifically, how they took place. But these events have not yet occurred in history. But also, the teaching of our Lord was that these things would happen in the future.

And what is described here lines up with what our Lord predicted. In Matthew 24:25, He prophesies events immediately preceding His return. And He refers to the abomination of desolation, which He says "was spoken of through Daniel the prophet." That is a reference to the abominations that Gabriel prophesies here in verse 27. That will happen, according to Jesus, at the end of the age.

So between the 69th week and the 70th week, there's a gap. And that may be a little disturbing to some, this gap. And yet, that's not at all unusual to prophetic literature. As you read through the Bible, as you study prophecy, you know that there are statements in the Old Testament in the prophets that seem to be consecutive. And yet, we know now that there are gaps between them, gaps between the first and the second coming of Christ that you don't see very clearly, clearly at all as you read the Old Testament.

But you come to realize the gaps are there from an understanding of the New Testament, which you have here. There's been a break in the action, so to speak. We're living in the unforeseen gospel age. But the action will be resumed. It will resume in that seven-year period of tribulation.

There will be a time of persecution of the Jewish people, and the leader of it is a person who will break a covenant in the middle of the 70th week. "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, – " meaning seven years – "but in the middle of the week – " three and a-half years into that seven-year period, he will break the

covenant. "He will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering." He's identified in verse 26. He's called "the prince who is to come."

And we know he comes from Rome. We know that because he is of the people Gabriel said, "who destroyed the temple" in AD 70." Those are his people. This is a Roman prince, and we've seen him before. We saw him back in chapter 7 of Daniel's prophecy.

He's that little horn that arises, that is very unusual, because this little horn which becomes great has the eyes and the mouth of a man, and he speaks against the Most High and wears down the saints. He's the antichrist of 1 John. He is the new Caesar of what appears to be a revived Roman Empire during the great tribulation. The details of all of this no doubt were murky to Daniel. And, really, they're somewhat murky to us.

We don't have the kind of clarity that we might like. But from the prophecy, there will be a future treaty. We can gather that from what is said here – a firm covenant that's made with the Jewish people. And what's interesting about all of this is we're living in days in which we can see how all of this could very easily play out. A hundred years ago, this must have been even more murky to those who were interpreting things.

But today, with all which we see going on in the Middle East, we can understand very clearly how a charismatic figure might come on the scene and put things in order so to speak, or get you the hope of doing that. It could very likely be that this man comes on the scene and he promises to bring peace between the Arabs and the Israelis to end that whole conflict and to bring about order. And he has the kind of charisma that draws people to him and they give their confidence to this individual. It's not at all an unlikely scenario to see it in that vein. It will give the Jews access to the temple mount.

We know that because they're going to rebuild the temple. There's going to be a temple in this prophecy. And they'll be able to resume their ancient sacrifices. That's what the prophecy says. So you can see there's access to the temple mount.

They're able to rebuild the temple, to reconstitute their ancient religion as it had been stated in the books of the law. And this prince will be their protector, and he will protect them for the first three and a-half years. But then, in the middle of the seven years, he will turn on the Jews. He will break his agreement. He will stop the sacrifice.

He will commit, what is described here, as abominations that make desolate. He will be like Antiochus Epiphanes who set up an idol of Zeus in the temple. Only in this case, the antichrist will set himself up in the temple to be worshipped. Paul tells us about that. We've seen this in our past studies.

But in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, Paul speaks specifically of this. He calls this individual, this prince, he calls him the "man of lawlessness" and "son of destruction." He will "exalt himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that, Paul says, "he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God." Now, when Paul wrote that, there was a temple. There's no longer a temple, hasn't been a temple since 70 AD.

But he was prophesying something to come; it hasn't yet happened. There'll be a temple rebuilt that we would assume this individual enables the Jews to construct and resume their worship. But then this blasphemy will take place there. And our Lord warns about this in Matthew 24:15-16, when He says, "When you see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place (let the reader understand) – " the statement in parenthesis there – "flee to the mountains," the Lord says. Escape, that's the sign to leave. Danger is coming.

A reign of terror is about to begin, and the reign of terror would last for three and a-half years. But then suddenly it would end when Messiah the Prince returns. Then a "complete destruction," that has been "decreed," will be "poured out on the one who makes desolate." The antichrist will be destroyed, and that will be the end of him and the deliverance of Israel. That is the prophecy of Daniel's 70 weeks.

Sixty-nine have been fulfilled, precisely. The 70th week is yet to come. We have some details about it. It's all very interesting. But is it practical?

And I think it's very practical. It's practical in one sense in that it reconfirms to us the voracity of the Word of God. It's been fulfilled time and time again precisely. These prophecies are genuine. That's supernatural.

This book is believable and it's the ground for our confidence, confidence in the Lord and what He's doing. It's encouragement also for the future. It also has another practical benefit. Dr. Donald Campbell wrote a very helpful commentary on the Book of Daniel. And he tells the story of Leopold Cohn, a European rabbi who studied this prophecy, the prophecy of the 70 weeks, and concluded from verse 26 that the Messiah had come.

He asked **the** old rabbi where the Messiah was, and he was told, "Go to New York, you'll find Him there." I don't know what books that rabbi was reading. But that's what he told him. "Go to New York and you'll find the Messiah there." So Rabbi Cohen sold most of his possessions; he booked his passage and he came to America.

And while he was wandering the streets of New York City, he heard some singing coming from a building, went in and he heard the gospel being preached, and he received Christ. He found the Messiah in New York. Now, shortly after, he bought a stable. This was in the late 1800s. And he cleaned it out and he began hold gospel meetings.

It was the first outreach of what became the American Board of Missions to the Jews. It's now Chosen People Ministries. But it's an event that shows how practical prophecy is. Prophecy's very practical. It's even mathematically precise.

My Israeli acquaintance said he loved math. He thought it was the truth. Well, do the math in Daniel 9. The numbers don't lie. They demonstrate the truth of the Bible, the voracity of God's Word. The Messiah has come.

He was cut off, but He was also raised up, proving that God accepted our Lord's sacrifice for sinners. He made atonement for sin in fulfillment of verse 24. And He's coming back, and He's coming back to end this evil age and establish righteousness upon the earth so that the kind of events that we witnessed this week will not happen again. And that's our hope, and it's a certain hope. It's been decreed.

And we see how the decrees of God come to pass precisely. So what should we do? Well, we should hope and we should pray. That's what Daniel did. He saw the prophecies, they were certain to be fulfilled.

But that drove him to prayer, and it should cause us to pray as well. It did the apostle John at the end of the Book of Revelation. After spelling out the prophecy and what's going to take place, and doing so in great detail and with complete confidence that it was all going to be fulfilled, he prayed. That's really how the Bible ends. He prays, "Amen, come Lord Jesus."

Well, the Lord is going to come, so we're to be praying for it. We're to be hoping for it, we're to be looking for it. Are you doing that? Are you looking for him? If not, if you're here without Christ, we invite you to come to Him.

He is the Messiah, He is the Prince, He's the Savior of the world. He saves all who come to Him. You'll find Him here. You'll find Him right here in Believers Chapel. You don't have to go to New York City to find the Messiah. He's here.

He's wherever you are and you believe in Him. He receives you immediately. He and the Father take up residence within your heart through the Holy Spirit, protects your life and guides you to an eternal future. We have a glorious future to come, and we have a very absolutely secure present. Look to Christ, trust in Him. And you who have – and I hope it's everyone here – rest in Him, rejoice in Him. Let's pray.

[Prayer] Father, what a great promise that is that we stand in the power of Christ. No power of hell can pluck us from His hands, from

your hand. We are absolutely secure in Him, secure in the present and secure forever. And we have a glorious future because of what your Son did for us in the past, what He did for us on the cross, what you have ordained from all eternity to take place. We thank you that your Word is fixed, it's certain. And we give you praise and thanks, thanks for all that we have in Christ. And it's in His name we pray. Amen.